

LCGCC Recommendations submitted by Dee Eggers (Transportation Policies) - February 5, 2010

General Transportation Recommendations.

Transportation is second only to energy generation in volume and rate of growth of GHG emissions. With regard to CO₂ emissions, specifically, transportation is the largest and fastest growing end-use sector. Transportation accounts for one-third of all U.S. end-use sector CO₂ emissions. In North Carolina, both population and annual vehicle miles traveled per person are increasing rapidly.

The General Assembly may consider the following policy opportunities to decrease GHG emissions from the transportation sector at such time as they are determined to be beneficial to the economy and citizens of North Carolina.

ANTI-IDLING

Emissions associated with idling from school children being driven to school should be targeted for reduction. The General Assembly should encourage the following:

- For new schools, there should be a statewide policy of locating them where as many children as possible are within walking/biking distance and requiring that adequate bike/pedestrian facilities be included in construction.
- When a district is closing or consolidating schools, they should eliminate the location-inefficient schools first.
- Over time the location policy should be expanded to include libraries, community centers, municipal buildings, and any other public facilities citizens might walk to if given the option.
- Provide education and encouragement to help parents prioritize mode choice for school trips by emphasizing biking/walking, then taking the bus, then carpools.
- Teach or require parents who insist on driving their children (including carpools) not to idle their cars while waiting in line.
- Modernize the fleet of school buses.

FREIGHT AND PASSENGER RAIL

- Work with railroads and manufacturers to increase the percent of freight traveling by rail.
- Work with railroads and manufacturers to increase passenger rail travel.

TRANSIT / TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

- Evaluate the potential of alternative fuel express buses between Raleigh and all Transportation Management Areas.
- Provide more state operating assistance to local transit systems, with incentives for alternative-fuel buses, transit-supportive land-use policies, efficient route

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design, on-time performance, and mode share. This may become revenue-neutral by restricting construction of new single-occupancy vehicle capacity.

- Fully evaluate transit and travel demand management alternatives to road widening. In many locations these options are more cost-effective as well.
- The evaluation of highway projects in or near a metropolitan area should include evaluation of at least one transit or transportation demand management alternative.

LAND USE / TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND POLICY

- Continue and increase funding for revitalization of commercially viable, pedestrian-friendly downtowns. This may become revenue-neutral by reducing services provided to less carbon-efficient development on the periphery.
- Change the Equity Formula so that counties with Comprehensive Plans that address coordination of transportation and land use receive significantly more transportation funding than those who refuse to plan their growth.
- Provide planning assistance to counties so that all have an equal opportunity to develop plans regardless of economic status.
- Encourage local governments to provide incentives to developers or otherwise encourage transportation-efficient location, density, incorporation of bike/pedestrian facilities, preservation of trees, energy-efficient buildings.
- Provide tax credits or otherwise incentivize purchase or renovation of existing homes or green-built infill homes in urban or rural downtown areas. Remove incentives for purchase or construction of new homes in auto-oriented new greenfields subdivisions.
- Decommission or at least give road diets to underutilized roads – even if there isn't a lot of traffic on them, maintaining them has a carbon footprint and leaving them may incentivize future sprawl as market conditions change. This would be a cost savings over current policy.
- Encourage local governments to create limits on drive-through restaurants (and other drive-through facilities), particularly in congested urban areas.
- Repeal the act that requires cities to let people hook up to their water systems and keeps them from charging differential rates to those outside their jurisdiction.
- Change annexation/incorporation laws so that new municipalities must have a central business district, a higher minimum density, and some actual community cohesiveness in order to incorporate so that they can't incorporate just to avoid becoming part of a neighboring city which would charge higher tax rates and/or put more restrictions on sprawl development

BICYCLE / PEDESTRIAN

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- Do not provide state funding (or federal funding allocated by the state) to road projects in incorporated or developed areas that do not include ADA-compliant pedestrian facilities.
- Improve state standards for sidewalk design so that new roads or roads undergoing major expansion and addition of sidewalks have a planting strip with street trees between the car lanes and the sidewalk. (This should not greatly increase costs as in many cases DOT is already acquiring extra right-of-way with the intention of widening the road to increase vehicle capacity at a later date.)
- All bus fleets should be equipped with bike racks.

AIR QUALITY / ALTERNATIVE FUELS

- Require a carbon analysis of any major new transportation project, whether or not it is in a non-attainment area, and make the results of that analysis account for a significant portion of any evaluation method

FUNDING / FINANCING

- Require NCDOT to spend more than the federally mandated minimum of 3% of Surface Transportation Program funding on enhancements, e.g., 3-5% specifically on bike/ped + 1% on planting/wastewater management + 1% on transit-related enhancements like bus shelters and ADA accessibility of bus stops

ENVIRONMENT

- Implement purchasing policy for least environmentally damaging paving materials

PROJECT PRIORITIZATION

- Ensure that the next iteration of the Strategic Prioritization effort led by NCDOT places other modes on a more equal footing with highway projects. A prioritization model specifically designed for bike/pedestrian, transit, rail, ferry, and aviation projects is needed.
- The definition for “multi-modal” used to reward projects that include multi-modal elements is restricted to elements that would primarily be found only in highly urbanized areas. The multi-modal definition should be expanded to allow projects to score higher if they provide or enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity. Projects that include these components should fare better in a statewide prioritization process that seeks to distribute limited funds. NCDOT does not have enough funding to build all of the road projects that are needed/wanted in the state, therefore greater investment in bike/pedestrian and transit projects is a logical investment that diversifies the system, helps preserve the facilities we do

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have, and lowers vehicle miles traveled and the need for greater capacity. Also, the points awarded for multi-modal elements should be higher, so that multi-modal projects overall fare better in comparison to projects that do not include those components.

- The proposed urban loop prioritization process includes an evaluation of economic development potential of the 10 urban loops being studied. The model that is being used to evaluate economic development potential, particularly when comparing the potential for development at interchanges between various urban loops, may reward sprawl by providing greater points for projects where more development is possible. In other words, an urban loop that travels outside of the developed area will be followed by sprawl development at its interchanges, and may earn more points than a design in which use of existing routes not only lowers its project footprint and right-of-way costs, but also lowers its potential for inducing sprawl in outlying areas.

TRANSFORMATION OF VEHICLE FLEETS

- To effectively utilize smart electric vehicles require a smart grid and vehicle charging stations in public areas with net-metering capabilities so vehicles can be used as a means of energy storage and supply.
- Encourage development of biofuel and alternative fuel sector and vehicle fueling infrastructure (e.g., compressed natural gas fueling stations) by encouraging municipal fleet conversion.